

MEMORANDUM TO : Deputy Director (Support)

SUBJECT : Reading Improvement Instruction  
for Selected Agency Personnel

1. This memorandum suggests action on the part of the Deputy Director for Support. Such requested action is contained in paragraph 6.

2. Statement of the Problem:

The 9 December Office of Training Weekly Report to the Director of Central Intelligence included an item entitled, "Evaluation of Basic Course, Reading Improvement". Subsequently, Mr. Dulles invited the Chief, Reading Improvement Branch, to brief him in detail concerning the values of reading improvement instruction. The Director then expressed the opinion that this instruction should be a part of the basic training of all new personnel of the Agency. Accordingly, OTR has studied the implications of his expression, and has determined what would be required to put it into effect.

3. Facts Bearing on the Problem:

- a. Instruction in reading techniques can improve substantially the reading habits of anyone. Instruction for CIA employees, however, is practicable only for those employees whose positions require mass or specialized productive reading, whose reading skills are of less than maximum efficiency for the requirements of their offices, and whose general capabilities indicate a potential for improvement. Job analysis and personnel testing can identify those individuals for whom instruction will develop and sustain versatility in reading techniques, and increase reading comprehension and speed, relative to their position requirements.
- b. The Office of Personnel has prepared for OTR a list of 118 positions, primarily professional, where work performance requires considerable time and attention to mass and specialized reading materials. The Office of Personnel estimates the total 1957 entrance-on-duty in these positions will

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be approximately 500 professional, semi-professional, and clerical personnel. Experience from prior testing programs indicates that, of these, 375 will benefit measurably from reading improvement instruction.

- c. OTR's effort to adjust to its present manpower ceiling has made it necessary to curtail the reading improvement instructional capacity, and additional slots from the OTR table of organization could be produced for this purpose only at the expense of other activities of higher priority.
- d. Present capacity in this area of instruction is committed fully to the current, registered student workload. These students are on-duty personnel in the positions designated by the Office of Personnel, and have registered voluntarily with the approval of their supervisors.

**4. Discussion:**

This Office has considered alternative methods of meeting this new training requirement should it become mandatory. Possible alternatives are:

- a. To recruit cleared reading improvement instructors on a contract basis.
- b. To contract for the instruction at external facilities.
- c. To increase the T/O of the Office of Training.

The first alternative would meet the training requirement but would entail a higher cost per unit of instruction. Alternative b., while less costly than a., would not meet the peculiar requirements of the Agency since the curricula employed are not flexible enough to include instruction or practice in the techniques of scanning or analytical reading. Moreover, the course materials used are confined to fiction and periodical literature. There is also some security hazard in the discussions between instructor and students about the kind of material they read. Finally, other facilities in the area could not adjust themselves to the estimated CIA training load without corresponding increases in their facilities and physical equipment.

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5. Conclusions:

The most practicable way in which this requirement can be met is by the assignment of additional positions to the Office of Training for this purpose.

6. Recommendations:

It is recommended that:

- a. You determine whether or not the DCI intends that instruction in reading improvement techniques be mandatory for new personnel entering the designated position-categories, after considering the facts set forth above.
- b. If the answer to a. is affirmative, authorize an increase of four (4) persons for this program in the OTR table of organization; authorize the allocation of additional classroom and office space in the amount of 610 sq. ft.; and direct the issuance of a regulation to ensure that the appropriate personnel are entered in this program.



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Acting Director of Training

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